



Minutes from the regular meeting of the
Asheville Downtown Commission
September 11, 2009 at 8:30 am
Office of Economic Development
29 Haywood Street in downtown Asheville

Members Attending: Councilman Jan Davis, Vice Chairman Dwight Butner, Chairman Jesse Plaster, Downtown Association President Byron Greiner, Kitty Love, Peter Alberice, Harry Weiss and Guadalupe Chavarria

Members Absent: Brad Galbraith, Pam Myers, John Rogers

Staff attending: Alan Glines, Jessica Bernstein, Sam Powers, Stephanie Monson, Bob Oast, Judy Daniel, Sasha Vrtunski

Chairman Plaster opened the meeting at 8:30 am.

Minutes

Members reviewed the minutes from the previous meeting.

Motion made by Greiner to approve the minutes as presented; seconded by Weiss and unanimously approved.

Downtown Master Plan

Project Manager Sasha Vrtunski relayed the following regarding progress on the Downtown Master Plan (DTMP) Implementation:

- ? Implementation Committee, an official ad hoc committee of Downtown Commission (DTC) is now called the Action Committee (AC).
- ? 55 applicants submitted to the call for membership to the AC
- ? Applicant pool very good but some additional outreach will be needed to achieve balance and skills needed by AC subcommittees.
- ? At least one DTC member will serve on each subcommittee, and at least one city staffer will assist each subcommittee:

Arts – members Love and Myers, staff Diane Ruggerio (superintendent of cultural arts)

Historic Preservation- member Weiss, staff Stacey Merten (director of historic resources)

Transportation and Parking- members Davis, Butner and Chavarria, staff Ken Putnam (interim director of transportation department)

Urban Design and Development- members Alberice, Plaster, Galbraith, and Weiss, staff Alan Glines and Jessica Bernstein (Planners)

Downtown Management- members Butner and Greiner, staff Sam Powers (Director of Economic Development)

- ? Overall AC will meet quarterly, subcommittees meet more regularly.

Judy Daniel gave an update regarding progress on the Urban Design and Development implementation activities currently underway by the Planning Department

- ? Reminder that this area is receiving focus based on perceived need (prioritization) by Council, citizens, and the Downtown Commission
- ? Staff needs the Downtown Design Review Subcommittee (Weiss, Alberice, Galbraith, Rogers) to be the sounding board for now until UD subcommittee fully established and able to meet.

The Commission discussed methods of appointing people to the subcommittees. A motion was made by Greiner and seconded by Butner to have the nominated membership list for the committees come back to the Commission next month for approval. The motion passed unanimously.

Presentation by Downtown Association

Tax Value and the Central Business District/Downtown Management

Downtown Association President Greiner introduced Planner and Urban Designer Joe Minicozzi to the Commission. As part of the Issues Committee (of the Downtown Association) workplan, Minicozzi and intern Josh McCarty have studied the taxable value of the Central Business District over time and the state/county/municipal distribution methods of recent tax revenues in comparison to 30 other North Carolina cities, along with other downtown management data. Cities that had downtown management entities were surveyed as to what services they provide. The impetus for this tax allocation-specific part of a larger downtown study was to develop data for decision makers that illustrated relationships between a downtown's tax generating revenue and the allocation (percent) of tax receipts reinvested back to the downtown. The Downtown Association is not sure yet what the percent range is that successful downtowns see in tax receipt reinvestment; however they do now know what these 30 cities are doing. Other patterns of information began to emerge when looking at this data, and the Downtown Association plans to work with the Implementation committee on downtown management moving forward. The Commission was very appreciative to see the data and spent a good deal of time discussing the possible implications.

Staff Updates

Monson noted to the Commission that the Cathy Ball, who up to this point had served as the City's Transportation and Engineering Director, had taken the position of Public Works Director. The City's Stormwater Division would now be under Public Works. Assistant Director of Transportation and Engineering has been promoted to Director. Monson relayed that City Council was considering a goal setting retreat in December of this year, instead of in January, the usual time for Council retreat.

Alan Glines spoke to the Commission regarding the process for adoption of new design guidelines. The design subcommittee has met with staff a few times and is trying to devise a process along with providing comment on the actual content. The goal would be to move them forward as written/recommended by the plan, but add some comment for consideration. The new design guidelines should be a fairly concise document.

The Commission asked Glines and Bernstein to work with Weiss on a roadmap toward adopting the new guidelines.

Meeting Adjourned at 10.50 am

